United Nations A/AC.183/2017/1

General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 February 2017

Original: English

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Programme of work for 2017

I. Mandate of the Committee

1. The mandates of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat for 2017 are contained in General Assembly resolutions 71/20 and 71/21.

2. In its resolution 71/20, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", the General Assembly requested that, in the light of the onset of the fiftieth year of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the Committee, in cooperation with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, focus its activities throughout 2017 on efforts and initiatives to end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967. In that context, the Assembly requested that the Committee continue to: (a) promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination; (b) support the achievement of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders; (c) mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people; (d) keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General; and (e) cooperate with civil society organizations and involve additional civil society organizations, particularly in the light of the current period of political instability and humanitarian and economic hardship, in order to contribute to the alleviation of such hardships among the Palestinian people, including Palestine refugees.

3. In its resolution 71/21, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", the General Assembly requested that the Division continue to undertake activities in support of the mandate of the Committee, including: (a) monitor developments relevant to the question of Palestine; (b) develop and expand the "Question of Palestine" website and the documents collection of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine; (c) prepare and widely disseminate publications pertaining to the question of Palestine; (d) organize international meetings and conferences with the participation of all sectors of the

17-02590 (E) 230217

Please recycle

international community, including the continued participation of eminent persons and internationally renowned experts; (e) liaise and cooperate with civil society organizations and parliamentarians, including through the Working Group of the Committee and its associated "UN Platform for Palestine"; (f) develop and enhance annual capacity-building programmes for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine; and (g) organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, including an annual exhibit or cultural event in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine.

II. Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

4. Since the submission to the General Assembly of the report of the Committee covering the period from 7 October 2015 to 3 October 2016 (A/71/35), Palestinians have continued to suffer human rights violations on an almost daily basis as a result of practices and measures carried out by the Israeli occupying forces, inter alia, attacks on and detention of human rights defenders, severe restrictions on freedom of movement and speech, military incursions and raids in many parts of the West Bank, excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests and detention without trial for prolonged periods, torture and mistreatment of Palestinian prisoners and forced displacement of civilians, all of which raise serious concerns about the protection of civilians. Such violations have been thoroughly documented by relevant United Nations agencies on the ground. The escalating trend in illegal settlement construction, the retroactive "legalization" of outposts and the increased number of demolitions of houses and other civilian structures and evictions not only constitute violations of international law but further fragment the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and undermine any future viable Palestinian State on that territory.

5. In East Jerusalem, tensions around the holy sites, particularly at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, the expansion of settlements, the spike in house demolitions and the ongoing forced displacement of the Palestinian population — as documented by international, Palestinian and Israeli organizations — are making the situation extremely volatile, with disruptive consequences for the just resolution of the status of Jerusalem and the conflict within the larger context of preserving the two-State solution on the basis of international law and the long-standing international consensus.

6. In the Gaza Strip, where the Israeli blockade is now in its tenth year, the slow pace of reconstruction after the conflict in 2014 has subjected the Strip to a process of prolonged de-development, including a staggering 60 per cent Palestinian youth unemployment rate. The economic and environmental toll has been so heavy that as early as 2012, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development declared that Gaza would become unliveable by 2020.

7. Divisions among Palestinian factions have profoundly affected legitimate Palestinian national interests and prospects for peace. The Fatah Congress held in November 2016, which included members of Hamas and other groups, offers the promise of advancing the much-needed national unity and reconciliation on the

basis of the common goal of bringing about the end of the Israeli occupation and the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence.

8. The international community, particularly France, the Quartet, Egypt and the Russian Federation, has made recent efforts to advance the Arab Peace Initiative and put forward a new, expanded multilateral framework with a view to reigniting the peace process on a new political horizon with the necessary international support. In that context, the adoption of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) on 23 December 2016, the first one addressing the question of Palestine in the Council since 2009, represents a significant contribution.

9. By its resolution 2334 (2016), co-sponsored by 3 members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (Malaysia, Senegal and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)) sitting on the Security Council along with New Zealand, and supported by another 10 members of the Council, including 2 Committee members/observers (Egypt and Ukraine), for a total of 14 in favour and one abstention (United States of America), the Council reaffirmed the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and that Israel's establishment of settlements in Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution. It underlined that the Council would not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations and called for affirmative steps to be taken immediately to reverse the negative trends on the ground that imperil the two-State solution. The Council called upon all States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967. It also called for immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians and compliance with obligations under international law for the strengthening of ongoing efforts to combat terrorism. Furthermore, the Council called upon all parties to continue to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010. In that regard, it urged the intensification and acceleration of international and regional diplomatic efforts and support aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Lastly, the Council reaffirmed its determination to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of its relevant resolutions and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council every three months on the implementation of the resolution.

III. Priority issues in the programme of work of the Committee for 2017

10. The mandated activities of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights represent a significant contribution by the United Nations and its membership to efforts to advance the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and facilitate the achievement of a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. To mark half a century of Israeli occupation of Palestine and

the seventieth year of the United Nations resolution by which Palestine was partitioned, the Committee will focus its activities throughout 2017 on mobilizing international awareness and support towards ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and the peaceful settlement of the conflict, with a view to the following priority areas:

(a) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and independence;

(b) Progress towards a final agreement in accordance with international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

(c) The mobilization of international, regional and national action with respect to compliance by Israel, as the occupying Power, with its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention, including with regard to illegal Israeli settlements, the wall and the situation in East Jerusalem;

(d) The mobilization of international, regional, and national action, with respect to the blockade of Gaza and the overall dire humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

(e) The mobilization of international and regional support for national action with respect to capacity-building and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the State of Palestine, including the State of Palestine's right to development;

(f) Expansion of cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights and a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine;

(g) Enhancement of cooperation and coordination between all the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the implementation of their respective mandates to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination and an independent State of Palestine;

(h) Outreach to all Governments and organizations to enhance their cooperation and support to the Committee in the performance of its tasks, including with respect to achieving the end of the Israeli occupation, recognition of the State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders and its admission to full membership in the United Nations.

IV. Activities of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights

A. Action by the Committee

11. In 2017, the Committee will implement the request by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/20 that the Committee, in the light of the onset of the fiftieth year of the Israeli occupation, focus its activities throughout the year 2017 on

efforts and initiatives to end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and to organize activities in that regard.

12. The Committee will continue to report on the situation relating to the question of Palestine and mobilize appropriate international action in respect of critical developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in relevant meetings of the General Assembly and the Security Council. To that effect, the Committee and its Working Group will also hold regular meetings, briefings and events throughout 2017 at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

13. The Committee will continue to participate in relevant intergovernmental and other conferences and meetings, as necessary. The Committee considers such participation an important aspect of its work to promote international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

14. In cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, the Committee will continue to maintain contacts with the Government of the State of Palestine and Palestinian civil society. The Committee will continue to invite prominent personalities, United Nations system entities and civil society representatives to its meetings at United Nations Headquarters to further enrich the substantive content and format of its deliberations.

15. The Committee will continue to support United Nations system organizations and entities in their work aimed at assisting the Palestinian people in various fields and advancing a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

16. The Bureau of the Committee will continue to hold consultations with Governments and intergovernmental organizations to encourage their active involvement in its programme of work. The exchanges should help to promote an understanding of the mandate and objectives of the Committee. The Bureau will also reach out to all regional groups at the United Nations with a view to expanding its membership and increasing support for United Nations policies and the implementation of its relevant resolutions on the question of Palestine and for the activities of the Committee.

17. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/20, the Committee invites all its member and observer States and organizations to plan national and regional activities on the issue of Palestinian rights and the question of Palestine, with a focus on the fiftieth anniversary of the Israeli occupation and efforts to end it without delay.

B. International meetings and conferences

18. The Committee considers that its programme contributes to focusing the attention of Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and the public on the priority issues identified in the previous section and to exploring possible ways forward. Through the programme for 2017, the Committee will focus the attention of the international community on ending the occupation and achieving peace, as a matter of urgency.

19. Through its activities, the Committee intends to continue to draw the attention of the international community to the developments on the ground, including those that constitute obstacles to the launching of meaningful negotiations on issues relating to permanent status, in particular Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, and the legal obligation of third parties not to support or contribute to breaches by Israel of international law. The Committee will continue to prioritize the question of Jerusalem and mobilize the broadest possible international support on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by the State of Palestine.

20. The Committee will continue to invite civil society organizations, including youth and women's groups and refugee representatives, to relevant international meetings and conferences to mobilize support for a just solution to the conflict and solidarity with the Palestinian people. In that context, the Committee intends to resume annual consultations and conferences involving civil society.

21. In so doing, the Committee will explore additional formats other than international conferences, as appropriate: round tables, speaking tours and delegation visits. It will endeavour to organize its events in cooperation with interested intergovernmental organizations, such as the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the League of Arab States (LAS), and national Governments, with due regard to cost-sharing arrangements. It will strive to achieve gender and geographic balance among invited experts and will encourage the active participation of Governments from all regional groups. The Committee, through its Bureau, will regularly assess the outcomes of the international meetings and conferences and will disseminate the practical recommendations emanating from conferences and meetings to the United Nations membership at large and systematically evaluate them with a view to taking follow-up action, as appropriate. The Bureau will reach out to other members and observers of the Committee and encourage them to join the Committee delegations to the various events.

22. In 2017, the Committee intends to organize events such as the following:

(a) A Committee delegation visit to Central America (Mexico and Nicaragua) and a regional round table of the Palestinian diaspora in Central America (Managua, in February);

(b) A seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), in Beirut, in March;

(c) An international conference on the question of Jerusalem, in cooperation with OIC, in Baku, in May (to be confirmed);

(d) A United Nations (experts) meeting and a civil society forum to mark 50 years of Israeli occupation, at United Nations Headquarters in June (dates to be determined);

(e) A Committee delegation visit to East Africa in the second half of the year (dates and location to be determined).

C. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

23. In the course of 2017, the Committee will continue to cooperate on issues relevant to its mandate with the African Union, the European Union, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, OIC and LAS. The Committee will also reach out to other organizations and to the regional groups at the United Nations. Representatives of such groups and organizations will be invited to support and participate in the Committee's programme of international meetings and conferences.

D. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

24. The Committee recognizes the important contribution of Palestinian, Israeli and other civil society organizations worldwide and will continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations. Strengthening cooperation with civil society is an overarching objective for the Committee, and it will continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. A new strategy, adopted by the Committee's Working Group in October 2016, will guide future engagement with civil society. The strategy envisages support for action by civil society, undertaken both within the United Nations context and domestically, to influence Member States in favour of Palestinian rights. The Working Group hopes to contribute to enhanced coordination between civil society groups on the question of Palestine and to greater awareness among civil society about the work of the Committee.

25. The Committee will cooperate with civil society organizations active in such areas as public education and awareness-raising, human rights advocacy, humanitarian action, development assistance and conflict transformation, continuously seeking ways to improve day-to-day life for Palestinians.

26. The Committee will continue to invite civil society organizations to international meetings and conferences organized under its auspices, providing them with a platform for advocacy and informing policy and diplomatic action. As in the past, the events, organized under the auspices of the Committee, will also promote interaction and strategic coordination among Israeli, Palestinian and international civil society organizations.

27. The Committee will maintain and further develop its liaison activities with local, regional and international organizations and networks active on the question of Palestine. The accreditation of civil society organizations with the Committee will continue through its Working Group. Regular consultations among the Bureau, the Working Group and accredited civil society organizations and observers will further harness the potential of cooperation between the Committee and civil society. The Committee intends to resume its practice of convening annual civil society conferences.

28. To keep abreast of developments, the Working Group of the Committee intends to request accredited civil society organizations to submit periodic reports on their activities in support of Palestinian rights and self-determination. In addition, the Committee requests the Division to conduct research and report periodically on civil society initiatives related to the question of Palestine in its weekly *NGO Action News*. To raise awareness about the situation on the ground and ensure an effective flow of information between the United Nations and civil society, the Division will continue to regularly update the civil society web page of the "Question of Palestine" website (https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm), the "UN Platform for Palestine" website (http://unpfp.un.org) and the Division's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/UN.palestinianrights).

29. In 2017, the Committee and its Working Group intend to organize activities such as the following, in cooperation with Palestinian, Israeli and other civil society organizations worldwide:

(a) Organization, as appropriate, of meetings of civil society and consultations with civil society organizations in conjunction with international meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the Committee or separately;

(b) Participation of representatives of the Committee and the Division in important forums and other events on the question of Palestine organized by civil society organizations worldwide;

(c) Periodic consultation meetings of the Working Group with civil society organizations with a view to keeping them apprised of the various activities of the Committee, encouraging better coordination, participation and cooperation among them and with the Committee and other relevant United Nations entities, and receiving their views on the work of the United Nations and the Committee, in particular, and information about their current activities;

(d) Periodic briefings by representatives of Palestinian, Israeli and international civil society on the situation on the ground and their work in support of a peaceful realization of the two-State solution, to which all States Members of the United Nations, observers and civil society organizations are to be invited, held at United Nations Headquarters, including on the sidelines of major United Nations events, such as the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women;

(e) Assistance to Palestinian and Israeli civil society organizations in facilitating the participation of their representatives in meetings held under the auspices or with the support of the Committee and in major United Nations conferences other than those organized by the Committee;

(f) Speaking engagements at universities in the United States and for student groups visiting United Nations Headquarters;

(g) Outreach to civil society organizations that are not yet accredited with the Committee;

(h) Organization of a conference in June 2017 at United Nations Headquarters to provide a platform for strategic discussions among Palestinian, Israeli and international civil society organizations on ways forward to advance the exercise of Palestinian rights and put an end to the 50-year-old Israeli occupation, with the broadest possible participation;

(i) Preparation of a weekly bulletin (*NGO Action News*) providing updates on civil society initiatives on issues related to the question of Palestine worldwide;

(j) Screening of films;

(k) Production and dissemination of information materials on the activities of the Committee and the Working Group, including through social media.

Parliaments and interparliamentary organizations

30. The Committee firmly believes that national parliaments and interparliamentary organizations play an important role in shaping public opinion, formulating policy guidelines, influencing Governments and upholding international legitimacy in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee reaffirms the continuing importance of developing closer cooperation and effective partnership with parliaments and representatives of interparliamentary bodies in order to encourage the discussion, within the respective parliaments and among all strata of society, of ways of advancing peace in the Middle East and resolving the question of Palestine. To that end, the Committee will strive to continue to involve parliamentarians and representatives of interparliamentary organizations in international conferences and meetings organized under its auspices and will work towards organizing joint events with interested interparliamentary organizations. The Committee intends to reach out to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in particular its women's network, in the context of the Committee delegation visit to East Africa and the Pan-African Parliament in the second half of 2017.

E. Publications programme

31. The Committee considers the publications programme of the Division to be an important source of information and outreach activity that contributes to raising awareness at the international level of various aspects of the question of Palestine, the role and efforts of the United Nations and the work of the Committee. The Division is requested to continue to monitor and disseminate information on developments relevant to the question of Palestine and discharge its mandate by issuing, electronically and/or in print, the following publications:

(a) A monthly bulletin on action by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;

(b) A periodic review of developments relating to the Middle East peace process;

(c) An annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council relating to the question of Palestine;

(d) Reports of international meetings and events held under the auspices of the Committee;

(e) An annual bulletin on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(f) A weekly summary of civil society activities on the question of Palestine, entitled *NGO Action News*, which is available on the civil society web page of the "Question of Palestine" website.

32. The Committee believes that the Division, in consultation with the Bureau, should continue to review the existing publications and make proposals with regard to those that require updating, in particular the study entitled "Question of Palestine: legal aspects".

F. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

33. The Committee requests the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue its work on the further development, expansion and updating of the "Question of Palestine" website, including the web-based United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL). The Division should continue to ensure that the UNISPAL collection of United Nations and related documents is comprehensive and up to date and that the website's visual appearance, accessibility of information, and usability on mobile devices is improved by undertaking a redesign. It should also continue to provide information concerning the activities of the Committee through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and RSS feeds and alert users about materials newly posted on UNISPAL.

G. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

34. Calling upon the international community to uphold its responsibility to ensure justice for the Palestinian people, on 29 November 2016, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Committee organized a special meeting and a Palestinian exhibit at Headquarters entitled, "Palestinian Embroidery: Threads of Continuity, Identity and Empowerment" in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations. It supported similar observances at several United Nations offices abroad. The same day, at its annual general debate on the question of Palestine, the General Assembly adopted multiple resolutions renewing the mandates of United Nations entities charged with defending and advancing the rights of the Palestinian people, including the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights. In 2017, the fiftieth year of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the Committee is committed to mobilizing people throughout the world to take a variety of actions and hold events in solidarity with the Palestinian people to end the occupation that began in 1967.

H. Capacity-building programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine

35. The Committee considers that, in the light of the importance and usefulness of its capacity-building programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine mandated by the General Assembly, the Division should continue to develop and enhance the programme in 2017, inter alia with a view to supporting the Government of the State of Palestine in its efforts to establish more efficient,

accountable and transparent institutions and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that context, and under its auspices, the Division is requested to organize a capacity-building seminar regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, in cooperation with ESCWA, in Beirut in March 2017.

36. Recognizing the growing importance of cooperation among developing countries and regional and subregional organizations to share and implement sustainable, cost-effective and replicable experiences and solutions that work, the Committee requests that the Division step up engagement with those countries and organizations and expand the capacity-building programme in the context of the framework of South-South and triangular cooperation.

37. The Committee remains of the view that in selecting candidates for its capacity-building and training programme, special consideration should be given to promoting broad participation across institutions of the State of Palestine, to collaboration with other United Nations entities to avoid programme overlaps and oversaturation, and to achieving gender balance. Attention should also be paid to optimizing the use of resources to allow the maximum number of participants possible. Continued voluntary contributions from Member and Observer States and international organizations, in line with their capacity, are to be encouraged to put the programme on a solid financial footing. Training sessions should be held at United Nations Headquarters and at other locations, including in the State of Palestine, subject to the availability of funding.

I. Continuing review and assessment

38. The Committee will continue to review and assess its programme of work in the light of the situation on the ground and new political developments and will make adjustments as necessary. It will actively seek feedback from participants in the events organized under its auspices and from other partners, apply lessons learned and follow best practices.

39. Mindful of budgetary constraints, the Committee will make the most cost-effective utilization of resources a priority. It will endeavour to organize its events in partnership with interested United Nations entities, intergovernmental organizations and national Governments, with due regard to cost-sharing arrangements. It will invite the Division for Palestinian Rights to streamline documentation while making maximum use of modern information technologies, including paper-smart approaches where applicable. It will mobilize social media and bloggers to promote global coverage and interaction of its activities and events in a cost-effective way. It will strive to achieve gender and geographic balance among invited experts and will encourage the active participation of Governments from all regional groups. The Committee, through its Bureau, will regularly assess the outcomes of its activities and events, boost media exposure, attendance and interaction, and, where required, decide on steps to be taken to enhance the contributions of those activities to the mandated goals of the Committee. The Bureau will reach out to other members and observers of the Committee as well as the wider United Nations membership with a view to engaging them in the activities of the Committee to advance the end to the Israeli occupation and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.